



For Immediate Release  
June 5, 2000

## **EPA Launches Study in Seattle on Gastrointestinal Illnesses**

**Office of Research and Development**  
Ann Brown, Public Affairs, 919-541-7818

---

Research Triangle Park, NC.....Seattle residents are being recruited for a study by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and partners that will determine the rates of gastrointestinal illnesses in the community and identify the important environmental factors associated with these illnesses. The study is also being conducted in Spokane. Seven hundred residents will be enrolled in Seattle and 250 residents in Spokane.

Families with children between two and ten years of age or families with elderly over the age of 65 are eligible to enroll in the 18 month study. All participants will be asked to complete questionnaires and illness diaries and some will be asked to give blood and stool samples a few times during the study. For information on how to participate in the study, residents in Seattle can call (206) 684-7490.

Young children and the elderly experience six to ten episodes of gastrointestinal illness a year and adults experience one to two on average. Most of these illnesses are caused by microorganisms such as *Salmonella*, *Cryptosporidium*, *Giardia* and some viruses. These organisms can be spread by contaminated food, water and contact with infected persons or animals. Symptoms can include diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, abdominal cramping and fever. While most cases are mild and receive home treatment only, some may last for weeks or months and result in the need for hospitalization.

The study is being conducted by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's National Health and Environmental Effects Research Laboratory in Research Triangle Park, NC; Lovelace Clinic Foundation in Albuquerque, NM; Seattle Children's Hospital and the American Water Works Association Research Foundation. The lead investigators are Dr. Rebecca Calderon, of EPA and Dr. Floyd Frost, of the Lovelace Clinic Foundation.

The research team is working closely with the Seattle/King County Department of Public Health, Spokane County Health District, Washington State Department of Health and Seattle Public Utilities and several utilities in the Spokane area.

Seattle and Spokane are being studied because they best met the site selection criteria that include communities with populations over 100,000; paired communities that are geographically and demographically similar and communities typical of an American metropolitan area. The study will be completed in late 2001 and results will be made public after data have been analyzed.

For more information, contact Ann Brown, Public Affairs, EPA's Office of Research and Development, Research Triangle Park, NC, at (919) 541-7818.

###